

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7537

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 1577

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, CT

SUBJECT: US-CAR RELATIONS - MINISTERIAL VISIT

REF: A. BANGUI 1558 B. BANGUI 1407 C. STATE 207585

1. DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NOTED FORTHCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF FIVE-MAN GOCAR DELEGATION, INCLUDING THREE MINISTERS (REF A) FOR NEGOTIATION OF NEW AID AGREEMENTS WITH WORLD BANK.

2. SINCE WE HAD HAD NO FURTHER WORD FROM PRESIDENT BOKASSA ABOUT THE SPECIAL DELEGATION TO DISCUSS OUTSTANDING ECONOMIC ISSUES, WHICH PRESIDENT PROPOSED TO ME JULY 26 (REF B), I CONTACTED MINISTER AT THE PRESIDENCY BANGUI-TANDET AUGUST 17 AND AGAIN AUGUST 20 TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER NGAI-VOUETO DELEGATION WOULD BE EMPOWERED TO TAKE UP ECONOMIC ISSUES, NOTABLY ARREARAGES ON EX-IM LOAN. BANGUI-TANDET TOLD ME THAT HE UNDERSTOOD PRESIDENT NOW WANTED APPROPRIATE US REPRESENTATIVES TO COME TO BANGUI FOR DISCUSSION SINCE ALL DOCUMENTS AND FILES WERE MORE READILY AVAILABLE HERE. I RESPONDED THAT IN THE CASE OF SCED AND THE NATIONALIZED OIL COMPANIES REPRESENTATIVES MIGHT WELL COME HERE, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN QUITE EXPLICIT IN SAYING THAT HE WOULD SEND SOMEONE TO WASHINGTON IN CONNECTION WITH EX-IM PROBLEM. SPEAKING PERSONALLY I SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER AUTHORIZING A MEMBER OF THE NGAI-VOUETO/MOKODOPO DELEGATION TO MEET WITH EX-IM OFFICIALS FOR AT LEAST A PRE-
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LIMINARY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. IF IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO SEND

SPECIAL EMISSARY. I SAID THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THIS ISSUE NOT CONTINUE TO DRAG ON AND THAT GOCAR DISCUSS OUTSTANDING ARREARAGES WITH EX-IM DIRECTLY. BANGUI-TANDET SAID HE WOULD PUT THIS IDEA BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT. FYI HE DID NOT SUGGEST THAT COUNSELLOR BARKAN WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION AS SPECIAL EMISSARY.

3. COMMENTS WE ARE NOT CERTAIN WHETHER THE SIGNALS AT THE PRESIDENCY HAVE IN FACT CHANGED AND BOKASSA'S PROPOSAL OF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN BY OTHER CONCERNS AND INTERESTS OR IF BANGUI-TANDET WAS UNIFORMED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF USING BARKAN AS A SPECIAL EMISSARY. BARKAN, WHO IS ISRAELI AS WELL AS CAR CITIZEN, IS CURRENTLY VACATIONING IN CALIFORNIA, IS AWARE OF EX-IM PROBLEM FROM CONVERSATION WITH ME, AND IF DESIGNATED WOULD MAKE EXTREMELY GOOD REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH EX-IM. IN ANY CASE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO TAKE INITIATIVE TO CONTACT EITHER NGAI-VOUETO (THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION) OR MOKODOPO (THE MINISTER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR AID AND HENCE WITH AN ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF CONTINUED RECALCITRANCE ON EX-IM LOAN REPAYMENTS) TO DISCUSS EX-IM ISSUES. AS A FOLLOW-ON TO DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS IN WASHINGTON AND BANGUI, EX-IM MIGHT WELL CONSIDER HAVING ONE OF ITS OFFICIALS STOP OFF IN BANGUI DURING ROUTINE AFRICA TOUR TO MAKE A DIRECT PITCH TO GOCAR. IN THE END DISCUSSIONS HERE MAY BE THE ONLY WAY TO GET GOCAR TO SIT STILL LONG ENOUGH FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION OF CONCRETE SOLUTIONS.

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